

## GRANTEE MONITORING

Grantee Name	Chisago Life Care d.b.a. Options for Women/Chisago
Location/Address	6344 Elm Street, North Branch, MN 55056
Phone Number	651-674-2121
Date and Location of Site Visit	January 17 <sup>th</sup> , 2018 Options for Women/Chisago
Grantee Participants	Scott Johnson -Executive Director, Kori Schmidt- Client Services Director
MDH Participant(s)	Mary Ottman
Grant Agreement #/PO #	#109545

### **PURPOSE:**

In accordance with the MDH Policy 238.01 Grantee Monitoring, MDH will conduct at least one monitoring visit per grant period on all state grants of over \$50,000, and at least annual monitoring visits on grants of over \$250,000.

The purpose of the grant monitoring visit is to review and ensure progress against the grants' goals, to address any problems or issues before the end of the grant period and to build rapport between the state agency and the grantees. This visit may cover topics such as statutory compliance; challenges faced by the grantee, modifications made to the grant program, program outcomes, grantee policies and procedures, grantee governance, and training and technical assistance needs.

The findings or information obtained through this monitoring activity will be used:

- To ascertain how MDH program funds are being utilized
- To provide targeted technical assistance needs
- To improve program implementation performance
- To suggest other training needs
- In future funding decisions

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### OVERVIEW

1. Is the Grantee's non-profit 501(c) 3 status current? [Yes](#)
2. Does the Grantee have a central file containing the official records for this grant agreement and/or amendment? [Yes](#)
3. Where is this central file located? [Executive Director's Office](#)
4. Who is responsible for this central file? [Grant Staff – Executive Director and Client Services Director](#)
5. Does the central file include
  - The grant proposal? [Yes](#)
  - The award letter? [Yes](#)
  - The signed grant agreement and any/all amendments? [Yes](#)
  - Any/all requests and/or approvals for scope/budget changes? [Yes](#)
  - The work plan? [Yes](#)
  - Any/all payment requests (invoices)? [Yes](#)
  - Any/all signed subcontracts? Not applicable (no subcontracts) [Yes](#)
  - Any/all Progress Reports? [Yes](#)

### REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

1. Does the organization meet all reporting requirements as outlined in the grant agreement and/or amendment? [Yes](#)
2. Are expenditure reports submitted timely and accurately? [Yes](#)
3. Are progress reports submitted with all required information and in a timely manner? [Yes](#)

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### CONTRACTUAL

1. Does the Grantee have written policies or procedures addressing use of contractors and/or subcontractors? [Yes](#)
2. Were any sub-contractors paid from the MDH grant required to sign a contractual agreement outlining services to be rendered, duration of engagement, and pay rate? [Yes – Year 2 contracts have recently been submitted.](#)
3. Was the contractual agreement(s) reviewed and approved by MDH before implementation? [Yes – the same contract was used from Year 1.](#)

### PERSONNEL POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES OF THE GRANTEE

1. Are time distribution records (e.g., time-sheets) maintained to show how employees who are funded through, or contributed in kind to, the MDH grant and who work on multiple projects/programs spend their time? [Yes](#)
2. Do personnel and/or payroll records show dates of hire/termination, immigration status if applicable, actual hours of time worked, leave time, federal and state programs worked on, and earning for all employees who are funded through, or contributed in kind, to the MDH grant? [Yes](#)
3. Does the Grantee have policies and procedures in writing regarding:
  - Payroll?
  - Travel?
  - Overtime?
  - Timesheets?
  - Taxes?
  - Purchasing?
  - Compensated time off?

[The staff and board are working on all policies to cover these areas.](#)

4. Are employees time sheets approved? [Yes](#)

By whom (what position)? [Supervisor and/or Executive Director](#)

By the Executive Director? [Yes](#)

5. Does the Grantee's payroll preparation and distribution involve more than one employee? [Yes, by the Executive Director and the Board Treasurer.](#)

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6. Does an authorized official approve all checks before being signed? [Yes](#)

Additional Comments:

Chisago Life Care is a first time grantee and is working on developing and implementing their organization's policies and procedures. We recommend sharing your policies with MDH once they are approved.

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### PROGRAMMATIC QUESTIONS

Please use this space to answer all questions.

#### ***Program History***

- When was your program started? Why was it started? **34 years ago.** Why was it started? **To help those experiencing an unplanned pregnancy make informed decisions regarding their pregnancy.**
- What need does your program fulfill? **Free pregnancy testing, options counseling and non-judgmental support. Referrals for resources based on clients stated need. Mentoring and support to make positive life choices for both the client and their families in regard to health, wellness and healthy parent-child relationships.**
- How has the program grown or changed since its beginning? **We have grown from a single service, offering free pregnancy tests with lay counseling, to a multi-service center. We started offering Earn While You Learn parenting education classes a few years ago. Thanks to the grant funding we are now also offering a FitMoM program, Practical Fatherhood Program and an Intentional Living Program. Our Job Search and Readiness Program has been expanded. Our new Baby Café lactation support program launched this past summer.**

#### ***Grantee's Target population***

- Who does the organization primarily serve? **Pregnant women and or women with young children**
- What is the program's demographic and geographic coverage? **Our demographic is primarily Caucasian and a small percentage is other races. Chisago County and surrounding areas.**
- Review recent Demographic reporting. **Demographic reporting was reviewed and it was suggested that all numbers in each category must add up to the same number.**

#### ***Leadership and Governance***

- Effective Board: How many board members currently serve, who are they? **9. Ann Olson, Jackie Scheldorf, Betty Mitchell, Leah Lackas, Dan Gnau, Angie Gnau, Antonia Pocta, Bob Jennissen and Jackie Barton.**
- How often do they meet? How are they informed of organization's progress and challenges? **Once a month with additional event specific meetings as needed.**
- How supportive is the Board of the program? **Very supportive.**

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- How is the program staffed? [We have 3 staff members which includes an Executive Director, Director of Client Services and a Client Services Assistant.](#) Who is responsible for the supervision of grant staff? [Executive Director and the Director of Client Services.](#)
  - How are staff evaluated on their performance? How long have PA staff been employed there? [Staff are reviewed by their supervisors. Cindy Hagen was hired in August 2016, Kori Schmidt was a volunteer for 1 year prior to being hired on June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2016. Scott Johnson was hired as Executive Director in September 2017.](#)
  - How are staff background checks done? [It was recommended that all staff and volunteers who work with clients or funds should submit a background check. This is not a current practice of the organization.](#)
  - What is your organization's policy on complaints for staff and clients? [Complaints are brought to a Director and the Board of Directors. A non-involved party will contact the client. It was recommended that a written policy outlining these steps should be included in the organization's policies and procedures.](#)

### **Budget**

- Does the current budget reflect your work plan activities? [Yes](#)
- Is the budget accurate for the project size/scope? [Yes, spending down of the funding allocated is going well for Year 2.](#)
- Do you have any challenges with the budget or invoicing? [No](#)
- Has your Financial Reconciliation taken place? [No](#)
- If you have an elevated risk designation, and/ or your Financial Reconciliation report cited any concerns, these will be discussed. [This organization has a medium risk designation.](#)

### **Review Work Plan including:**

#### **Partners**

- If applicable: how are people referred to the program? Are there any barriers encountered with referral sources? What is your most common referral source? What is your most common referral source? [Friends, Website, Chisago County Human Services.](#)
- Challenges with partners or specific counties? [No](#)

#### **Work Plan**

- Review your 2016 – 19 grant application's description of the program you are asking to be funded. On your work plan note the services and activities you said you would provide and the number of clients you would serve.

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- **Prepare a short summary of your current program(s) and the number of clients being served.** How does what you describe in the application compare with what you are currently providing? Have any programs and/or activities or services been added or removed? [Based on our application we have added the FitMoM program which currently includes a weekly exercise class for clients and their children. We are now offering a Practical Fatherhood Program and an Intentional Living/Goal Coaching Program. We now have computer work stations for our Job Search and Readiness participants as well. Our lactation support group started back in June. It is a weekly group meeting and has been very well attended since the beginning. We offered a healthy cooking class last fall.](#) Have the number of clients being served per quarter decreased or increased since June 2016? Is there anything in particular you want to share about your current program to explain its current status? [Numbers of client's served has remained steady.](#)
- Do you anticipate making any changes to the 2017-18 Work Plan? If so, in what way and for what reasons? [Yes, some minor work count numbers may be modified to better reflect the work this grantee is doing.](#)

### Participants:

- [We cross refer with the Chisago County Public Health Department and local non-profits such as The Refuge Network and Family Pathways. What is working well? We tend to seek out specific partners based on client need. The community connections we have made are impressed with the work we do and the programs we offer.](#) What are the more the challenging aspects to finding or retaining clients? [None were described.](#)

### Data:

- How is program data collected and by whom? [Data is collected by the Director of Client Services on an excel spreadsheet.](#) Is data collected useful to agency? [We were collecting this data before through our Ekyros computer program. Having to separate clients based on the age of their children and/or pregnancy status is requiring additional tracking measures. It was suggested that the Ekyros program should be able to accommodate all your tracking and data collection needs. Please call the Ekyros team and ask for a training via your computer. Also use the short training videos on various topics in the help section of your program.](#)

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- Anything we can do to help or simplify data collection?

### **Review Evaluation**

- Your Year 1 Evaluation Report Summary will be discussed (If you were a past grantee). [An Evaluation study was completed on the increase in balanced meals eaten and the increase in Physical activity for clients participating in these programs. A completed summary and follow up was sent with recommendations for future evaluation projects. Please use these suggestions when planning and implementing all new evaluation projects.](#)
- Your Year 2 Evaluation Plan will be reviewed. Any suggestions provided in your 2016-17 Report Summary should be included in the plan, if you are continuing a similar evaluation. If you are planning a new evaluation, details will be discussed. Do you have any questions on your evaluation? [Year 2 Evaluation project will include reviewing their current shaken baby program. It was suggested that the Indicator presented for this year's project be modified to include a measurable outcome.](#)

### **Miscellaneous**

- Anything else you would like to share?
- Anything else we haven't asked?

### **What can we do to help?**

- Trainings and Grantee meetings useful for grantee? Any topic suggestions?
- Feedback or suggestions for the state?
- Is there any way MDH can assist you to better equip your success in the Positive Alternatives Grant Program?

### **Summary:**

[Chisago Life Care Center \(CLCC\) is located in the downtown district of North Branch. The location is easily accessible and is in a prime location for clients. The organization owns the building and has slowly begun to make the space welcoming and user friendly for all of their programming. CLCC is a first time grantee this grant cycle and has welcomed their new responsibilities as a grantee. Their work plan includes the following grant funded programming: outreach, case management services, crib distribution and safe sleep education, employment and education assistance, life skills education, material support, mental health assistance, mentoring, parenting education and pregnancy testing.](#)

[One area that CLCC has made great strides is in their outreach to local community partners. They have recently begun work with the local public health staff to offer a new innovative lactation program called, \*Baby Café\*. Work has also begun on connecting with local churches for support and to help spread the word about their work. They continue to look at ways to make their organization known in the community and are planning to spread the word on their programming through community education](#)



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publications. The organization has recently hired a new Executive Director that will further help to move the organization forward in their outreach and programming efforts.

After reviewing the current work plan, it was suggested that revisions may be needed to better reflect the work that is being accomplished by the staff. Staff will review the current work plan and Quarterly Update Form and submit the revised form for approval. A review of current organizational policies and procedures led both staff and a board member present at the meeting to recognize the need for a formal written policy and procedure manual. Recognizing this task as a best practice for their organization, it was agreed that work will continue on this important project. This should also include the policy of requiring background checks for all staff and volunteers working with clients or money.

Data collection was also an issue discussed. CLCC currently has a subscription to Ekyros, an online secure data and client collection system. Staff are relatively new and have not received full training on how to use the program to its fullest potential, therefore, they are also using an Excel form for collecting grant data. Staff will seek further training through the Ekyros staff and through the online tutorial topic trainings to help make these data collection tasks more manageable and streamlined.

When checking the organization's website, it was discovered that there are two different live websites for the organization. Staff suggested that the old website may still be on the internet and will check to make sure that this site is taken down. The organization's new site has been updated with new information and programming and is fully accessible for potential clients.

Staff was also reminded that the *Maternal and Child Health Task Force Strategies* listed on the last page of the Positive Alternatives Quarterly Update should be addressed by staff to be included in all client programming and filled in with all programming submissions.

CLCC has been a responsible Positive Alternatives grantee with all reporting submissions and has fully embraced using their funding to fulfill the work described in their original application. I look forward to our continued partnership with providing supportive programming and care for the women and their infants of Chisago County.

**Date: January 22, 2018**

**Grant Manager: Mary Ottman**